

# The CONFERENCE BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

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Number 1

## Regional Meetings in 1943

New York, N. Y. - - - March 8-12

St. Louis, Mo. - - - April 12-16

Cleveland, Ohio - - - May 24-28



Report of 1942  
Appraisal Committee

## THE CONFERENCE BULLETIN

OF THE

National Conference of Social Work

82 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio

**President:** Fred K. Hoehler, Chicago, Ill.

**Treasurer:** Arch Mandel, New York City.

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OCTOBER, 1942

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## The January Bulletin

**B**ECAUSE of the change in plans for the annual meeting the January Bulletin will be used to give the preliminary programs so far as they may be completed for all of the regional meetings which will take the place this year of the single annual meeting. By vote of the Executive Committee the annual membership directory will be omitted for the duration as an economy measure. It is both expensive to print and uses a large amount of paper. Also the rapid movement of social workers these days make its value as a directory much less because of inaccuracy of addresses. The printing of the membership directory will be resumed as soon as it is feasible to do so.

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## Who Is Planning the Program?

**S**OME people who attend the National Conference of Social Work or see its program believe that a few people sit down around a table and plan the program for the annual meeting. These same

people don't stop to wonder how a few people can know what is needed on the program to serve the needs of the many "varieties" of social workers who attend the annual meeting and yet the program material is there.

The table on page 7 shows the results of the first step in the program planning. Each fall prior to the first meeting of the Program Committee, one or more persons in each state is asked to serve as "program suggestion collector." In most cases the program suggestion collector either gets groups of social workers together or asks others to arrange meetings of their staffs to discuss what they feel is most important to them for the program of the National Conference. When this was done, it was indicated on the program suggestions when they were sent in. Most of the suggestions which were received this year were the result of this kind of group thinking. This shows that although the total number of suggestions received was 632, it probably means that at least 1500 people cooperated in making them. Not quite so many states and communities were represented in the suggestions this year as last but 72 more suggestions were received. (See Table on page 7.)

The program suggestions were sorted according to Sectional interest and sent to the chairman of the Section prior to the meeting of his Section Committee. After she had time to go over the program suggestions sent to her Section one chairman said, "I had thought I would have to do a great deal of work in finding out what subjects were needed. But now, I find that my work is to study the suggestions and build a program out of them."

Following the meeting of Section Committees, the Section Chairmen report the plans for the program as developed by the Section Committees to the Conference Program Committee for further discussion. This year because of the regional meetings the tentative program for each region will be discussed with a group of social workers in each city where meetings are being held. When this stage is reached approximately 2000 people will have cooperated in planning the program, the results of which will be seen at the regional meetings. This is no small group sitting around a table but a real demonstration of cooperation on the part of Conference members in program planning.

## The Conference Goes On A War Basis

AT its recent meeting in New York the Executive Committee of the National Conference of Social Work unanimously voted to hold three and possibly four regional meetings in the place of the one annual meeting originally scheduled for Cleveland in May 1943. This action was taken after careful consideration not only of the factors that would make the traditional meeting difficult but of the responsibility of the Conference to make its services available in a practical way to the largest possible number of social work leaders both lay and professional. The Committee has the conviction that social work is a necessary and vital part of the war effort and that the service of the Conference to social work will be more needed than ever before in the spring of 1943.

The location of the regional meetings was determined so as to make a minimum of travel necessary and to use cities where at least now there are facilities for holding them.

The schedule is:

New York City—March 8-12, 1943.

St. Louis, Mo.—April 12-16, 1943.

Cleveland, Ohio—May 24-28, 1943.

Pacific coast (if held)—late June, 1943.

The annual business meeting and the meetings of the administrative committees incident to it will be held at the Cleveland regional meeting. The election of officers and committee members which is conducted by mail will also be announced at Cleveland.

Each regional meeting will open with a general session on Monday night and close with a general session on Friday noon, thus giving three days for program meetings. The number of meetings usually held by the sections and special committees will be cut approximately in half. No breakfast, luncheon or dinner meetings will be scheduled. The Associate Groups will hold meetings at such of the regional meetings as they wish.

The Program Committee of the Conference which includes the Section chairmen is planning a program for each regional meeting that will be focused on the responsibilities of social work in the war.

There has not been time to complete the details of organization in these regions. These will be announced as soon as possible.

## Program Plans

THE change in plans for the annual meeting to regional meetings for 1943 has made necessary certain changes in the procedures for building the program. The regular Program Committee and the Section Committees will proceed as usual. Subject matter and suggested speakers will then be turned over to the office for completion of the details along the lines laid down by our regular Program Committee. After two days of careful discussion at its recent meeting the general principle for the program this year will be to have a certain amount of material national in scope with the same subject matter running through all three or four regional meetings. Obviously different speakers will have to be secured in many instances. In addition to the many suggestions which have been received from the field and the material suggested by the Section Committees themselves, each tentative regional program will be discussed with a local committee in the cities where the regional meetings will be held for advice and consultation on what will be of most use from a local point of view and a certain amount of the program for each regional meeting will be developed to meet these particular local or regional needs. The emphasis of the total program will be the place of social work in the war effort and the impact of the war on social work, its organization, methods and problems.

In this connection it is interesting that the response from our membership throughout the country with program suggestions exceeded any previous year. More than six hundred carefully thought out suggestions were received from seventy-seven communities in twenty-eight states. In almost every instance this was the work of a group rather than of an individual. While no accurate figure can be given it is estimated that well over a thousand different people participated in groups that thought through and sent in suggestions for the 1943 program. Full details of the program will be published in the January issue of the Bulletin instead of the April issue as heretofore.



## Report of 1942 Appraisal Committee

The report of the Appraisal Committee was ready for publication in the July Bulletin. However, exception was taken to the report by one of the members of the committee and publication was delayed until this issue in order to give Mr. Granger an opportunity to prepare a minority report which he has submitted herewith.

THE EDITOR.

**I**N its "ear-to-the-ground" assignment in New Orleans the Appraisal Committee gathered that the 1942 National Conference of Social Work—the smallest Conference in many years—was still one of the best. When the Committee had sifted the observations and comments, the criticisms and suggestions which had come to it, it concluded that the delegates were satisfied. Gripes were few; constructive proposals for future consideration by the officers and management seemed well chosen; general satisfaction of the delegates with the speakers, the physical arrangements, and the perpetual business of conferring was paramount.

A complete absence in New Orleans of the "lostness" of some delegates that has been observed at previous conferences indicated delegates' maturity, decision, and capacity to use the Conference.

Not since 1928 had the Conference gone South, and not since 1920 had it gone to New Orleans. The cordiality, the somewhat slower tempo, the sultry weather, all bespoke the South. Someone said even the entertainers in the French Quarter were more sultry than anywhere else short of Mexico.

There has been clear-cut debate for several years upon the question of whether the Conference should return to the South where admittedly the colored delegates would be deprived of many ordinary courtesies which would be accorded them as Conference delegates in northern cities. The decision to go to New Orleans in 1942 was a close one and those for and those against the decision watched the outcome with keen interest as the week progressed. Compromises had to be made. Where meeting places were on the second floor, everyone walked up as Negroes were not permit-

ted the use of the elevators. All breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings were omitted because Negroes could not be served. Decent living quarters, eating places, and taxi service for Negroes in downtown New Orleans are practically nonexistent. Thus, the Negro delegates in attendance made real sacrifices, and the discrimination which they still experience almost everywhere, but not at the hands of their social work colleagues, was accentuated. It was remarked that the Negro's right of full participation as professional coworkers was reiterated at all of the Conference sessions.

Fewer Negroes were present than usual, but they participated freely, and some of them made outstanding contributions. The evening Dr. Johnson of Fiske University spoke there were several hundred colored persons in the audience, although there were probably less than 100 of them who were Conference delegates. At the end of the week, a colored insurance broker, not a social worker, who had attended several meetings, said that it was the feeling of members of his race in New Orleans, that the holding of the Conference there had furthered race relations. Although hotels and restaurant accommodations had not been open to them, the fact that three thousand social workers had treated them as equals in every way in their power in a southern city, would leave a residue of benefit to the Negroes of the south. It should be stated that this long-range advantage was gained at a cost—proportionately fewer Negro delegates, great personal inconvenience to the Negroes in attendance, and the possibility that some white persons did not attend because of the restrictions on the basis of color.

### Administrative Arrangements

The smoothness with which the Conference got under way, and the accuracy with which problems had been anticipated is a credit to the Conference management. On the delicate race question, agreements had been negotiated wherein the New Orleans hotels willingly went farther than ever before in respecting the rights of Negroes as persons, and instructions to doormen, etc., were carefully carried out. Meeting rooms were adequate although somewhat scattered. This was because after the invitation to go to New Orleans was accepted, the City Auditorium in which most of

the meetings would have been held was mostly taken over by the Military Services. Other meeting halls four to eight blocks apart were found and delegates simply staged a walkathon between meetings and very few grumbled. The registration desk, the Conference Program, the exhibits, the arrangement for appointments, have all been developed to such a high degree of usability that even new Conference-goers catch on easily.

There was some regret expressed that either the smallness of attendance or the lack of centralization or both had diminished the Conference spirit of other years.

Many asked why the custom of having past presidents of the Conference sit on the platform on the opening night had been discontinued. Some said that social workers can and should sing "The Star Spangled Banner" on opening night instead of standing mute while the stirring strains are being played. Some registered an earnest plea that, now that the tradition of expensive formal dinner meetings has been broken, it not be revived. With the same degree of validity as in previous years we heard some people say: "Don't ask persons to speak who are known not to have good delivery"; and "Don't let discussants make speeches unrelated to the papers they are asked to 'discuss'."

It was seriously proposed by some members of the Social Action Section that this division of the Conference be disbanded on the ground that "social action" cuts across all the fields of social work, but particularly belongs with Public Welfare. This is something for future Conference program committees to explore and decide upon.

#### General Tone of the Conference

**America Again at War** permeated the Conference. However, this theme had to share prominence on the program with Problems of the South. As Jonathan Daniels said at an evening meeting, it was fitting that in this year of total war the Conference should be held in the deep south. He said that from its experience in the Civil War the south knows better than any other part of America what Total War means. The problems of humanity under the strains of war, the services and sacrifices necessary to meet these strains, the importance of winning the peace, of advancing simple justice for all,—these were the serious content of many meetings. It was as though the determination which has been released by war

were being constructively directed both at combating totalitarian conquest abroad and aspects of Fascism in our own American culture.

Probably only in the south could so much attention have been given to problems of the south,—the seed bed of America where 28% of the population is rearing 33% of the children, and where the standard of living is kept down for the profit of absentee owners. It was estimated that more than two-thirds of the delegates were from southern states; that there were from 5 to 13 public welfare workers from each parish in Louisiana; and it was reported that every member of the public welfare department of Mississippi was planning to attend at least part of the week. These are the social workers who struggle daily with the problems of health and welfare of these states. The social philosophy and the social work methods set forth in many papers by those who were wrestling with these problems stir a hope for a better economic and social future for the south.

There was excellent newspaper space given to the Conference meetings by the New Orleans papers. Noting this, delegates said the South is more likely to hear and to heed the truths about it expressed in its midst than if the Conference had been held in the north.

The observation was heard that, possibly because of the compromises which had been made on the race question, there was a tendency to eliminate controversy from the meetings. "Where are the old fighters?" it was asked. "We all seem to be so blended!" In general, however, the Appraisal Committee felt that the kind of hard facts which stimulate thought and action was freely expressed.

Several persons asked why Britain was the only one of our allies asked to participate in the Conference program. "Why were not Ambassador Hu Shih of China, Madame Litvinoff of Russia, and some of the statesmen of our Latin American allies there helping us round out the world picture and sharing in our thinking about the future? This is after all a Global War, a War for a Free World." The hope was expressed that another year the Conference will consciously focus attention on the international horizon.

Some one asked why the Conference did not have an outstanding labor leader on one of the evening programs.

Perhaps the most courageous note of all was that there does not need to be another great depression following this war. "Attacking on Social Work's Three Fronts," the title of President Harrison's address at the opening session, was the call to action which set the tone for the week. And in more than one session the thought was expressed that economists, sociologists and social workers who have ideas of how ill-health and suffering can be prevented need to become more vocal, to think more deeply and more broadly about the underlying forces which determine history, and to devise ways whereby their knowledge, and their suggestions will permeate regional, national, and international planning.

WILLIAM SAVIN, Chairman  
 IRENE F. CONRAD  
 VILONA CUTLER  
 EMIL FRANKEL  
 MARY L. GIBBONS  
 AUDREY M. HAYDEN  
 CONSTANCE PRINGLE RUDD  
 FLORENCE SYTZ  
 BENJAMIN YOUNGDAHL

## Minority Report

**A**S a minority of one I dissent from the findings of the majority of the Appraisal Committee on one item—namely, the arrangements provided for Negro members of the Conference and their importance in the general picture. The majority report recognizes the compromises that the Conference made in going to New Orleans. In addition, the report lists some of the inconveniences suffered by the Negro members over which the Conference itself had no control.

My dissent is on the basis of the emphasis which the majority report places on these compromises and inconveniences. It seems to me to be a bit of bland unrealism to acknowledge that Negro members of the Conference had no access to decent eating places, taxi service in rainy weather, or livable rooming accommodations within easy reach, and at the same time to term the Conference "one of the best" with which "the delegates

were satisfied." The Conference's officers and staff exerted every effort to insure the comfort of Negro members. The hotels of New Orleans evidently took special pains to insure their courteous treatment. All of this, however, only emphasizes the fact that it is impossible for the Conference to meet in a city in the deep south and provide to its Negro members the same sense of participation that would be theirs elsewhere in the country.

It is not especially important that "a colored insurance broker, not a social worker" felt that the holding of the Conference in New Orleans "had furthered race relations." It is not the business of the Conference to become a peregrinating interracial influence. The Conference's function is to serve as a forum in which social work problems may be discussed and clarified and in which professional and lay-workers may share opinions and experiences. The question for the Conference to decide is whether this function can be performed in an atmosphere where a minority, no matter how small, are constantly reminded of community hostility and are denied ordinary conveniences and courtesies which make the Conference a pleasant experience rather than a professional chore. In a state or regional meeting, a conference such as ours would seek to maintain the highest standards possible within that area. In a national meeting such as the New Orleans Conference was, it seems to me that the National Conference of Social Work cannot afford to be satisfied with anything less than the highest national standard.

LESTER B. GRANGER.

## The New Proceedings

**T**HE 1942 volume of the Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work is due for publication on November 17. However, it may be delayed a few days later. The Proceedings are sent directly by the publishers to all paid-up members of the Conference paying membership fees of \$5.00 per year or more. The volume is for sale to the public at \$5.00 per volume by Columbia University Press, New York City.



## Who Is Planning the Program?

Conference members and social work leaders submitted program suggestions  
for the consideration of the Program Committee as listed

<b>Alabama</b> .....	16	<b>Massachusetts</b> .....	16	<b>Oklahoma</b> .....	13
Birmingham .....	15	Boston .....	14	Chickasha .....	2
Montgomery .....	1	Cambridge .....	2	Enid .....	4
<b>California</b> .....	16	<b>Michigan</b> .....	17	Lawton .....	1
Sacramento .....	4	Detroit .....	11	Muskogee .....	1
Los Angeles .....	12	Grand Rapids .....	5	Oklahoma City .....	4
<b>Connecticut</b> .....	3	Saginaw .....	1	Seminole .....	1
Hartford .....	3	<b>Nebraska</b> .....	21	<b>Pennsylvania</b> .....	96
<b>District of Columbia</b> .....	14	Grand Island .....	1	Ardmore .....	3
<b>Georgia</b> .....	19	Lincoln .....	17	Berwyn .....	1
Atlanta .....	19	North Platte .....	3	Chester .....	2
<b>Illinois</b> .....	20	<b>New Hampshire</b> .....	1	Doyleston .....	1
Chicago .....	11	Concord .....	1	Jenkintown .....	1
Peoria .....	8	<b>New Jersey</b> .....	16	Lansdowne .....	2
Springfield .....	1	Newark .....	14	Philadelphia .....	56
<b>Indiana</b> .....	32	Trenton .....	2	Pittsburgh .....	13
Gary .....	4	<b>New York</b> .....	63	Scranton .....	15
Indianapolis .....	28	Albany .....	1	West Chester .....	2
<b>Kansas</b> .....	3	Brooklyn .....	1	<b>South Carolina</b> .....	13
Topeka .....	3	Buffalo .....	11	Greenville .....	7
<b>Kentucky</b> .....	3	New York .....	7	Greenwood .....	1
Louisville .....	3	Rochester .....	43	Orangeburg .....	1
<b>Louisiana</b> .....	47	<b>North Carolina</b> .....	4	Winnesboro .....	4
Baton Rouge .....	19	Chapel Hill .....	3	<b>Tennessee</b> .....	25
De Ridder .....	1	Eagle Springs .....	1	Memphis .....	11
Hammond .....	1	<b>North Dakota</b> .....	6	Nashville .....	14
Lacassine .....	1	Fargo .....	3	<b>Texas</b> .....	8
Leesville .....	1	Hickinson .....	3	Ft. Worth .....	8
New Orleans .....	23	<b>Ohio</b> .....	76	<b>Virginia</b> .....	18
Tallulah .....	1	Canton .....	14	Norfolk .....	9
<b>Maine</b> .....	1	Cincinnati .....	2	Richmond .....	9
Augusta .....	1	Cleveland .....	33	<b>Wisconsin</b> .....	12
<b>Maryland</b> .....	52	Columbus .....	27	Milwaukee .....	12
Baltimore .....	44	<b>No state</b> .....		<b>Total States</b> .....	28
Hyattsville .....	1	<b>Total Communities</b> .....			77
Oakland .....	1	<b>Total Suggestions</b> .....			632
Prince Frederick .....	1				
Rockville .....	5				

## A Statement to the Members of the National Conference of Social Work about Membership

ON October 1 of this year your Conference had 5,198 paid-up members in all classes. On the same date we were carrying on our books 1,563 members, the renewal of whose membership fees was from three to six months overdue. This makes a total of 6,761 members. To the members whose fees have been paid the Conference is deeply grateful. This is what makes the work of the Conference possible.

After discounting the normal number of members who die during the year or leave social work for other vocations the great bulk of those who have not renewed promptly falls into two classifications. First, is the group who do not find it convenient to renew when they receive their first statement. They intend to renew next week or next month and then for one reason or another the time slips by and they ultimately forget it. We know this to be true because of the number of renewals that we receive in the third, fourth or fifth follow-up. It would save considerable money, as well as time on the part of the office, if these renewals came in promptly—time and money that is needed to carry on the regular program of the Conference particularly in these critical days.

The second group consists of people who take out memberships in the Conference in the years in which they can attend an annual meeting but do not feel any responsibility for continuing membership during the years when because of distance or for some other reason they are not able to attend the annual meeting personally. This group quite unconsciously are benefiting, particularly in

the years when they can participate in an annual meeting, but benefiting nevertheless every year, because of the services the Conference renders to the whole field of social work, by the membership fees of others who are regular members and which make the year-round work of the Conference possible. We believe that if this group gave a little more thought to the service the Conference affords they would want to be among the group who are continuous members of the Conference year-in and year-out.

The cash value of the 1,563 memberships which have not been renewed this year is \$8,915. If these should all be renewed promptly, your Conference could carry on its work this year without any spectre of deficit. The work has been greatly increased by the new plan of operation for 1943. There has been no increase in staff.

We recognize that most of the people who will read this statement have already paid their membership fees. We ask that you use your influence to urge upon those who have not renewed to do so promptly and if possible secure new memberships from among your associates. For nearly seventy years the National Conference has contributed its service directly and indirectly to you and the social work of your community. It has geared its work this year to the war situation. Can you be counted on to help maintain that essential service to social work, not only by prompt renewal of your own membership when due,—but also by voluntarily securing new members from your community?

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of the National Conference of Social Work as follows:—

☐ Active, \$5.00    ☐ Active, \$3.00 (without **Proceedings**)    ☐ Sustaining, \$10.00    ☐ Contributing, \$25.00

Enclosed is my remittance for the indicated amount.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Please make checks payable to: Arch Mandel, Treasurer)

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK**  
82 North High St., Columbus, Ohio